

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

Rangelands Focus Group

**Minutes
July 22, 2008**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF)
J.R. McCollister	Public Member
Charles Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD)
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association (CFA)
Leonard Hale	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California (WFCSC)
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association (CWG)
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Representing

Richard Harris	UC Cooperative Extension
Karen Buhr	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Tacy Currey	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Tracy Schohr	California Cattlemen's Association
Kevin Olson	CAL FIRE

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

Mike Connor called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Introductions of all present were made.

Items 3, Review of the May 2008 minutes:

Deferred until the meeting of the Full RMAC.

Items 4 & 5, Impacts of Wildland Fire Suppression Activities to Rangeland Resources. Promoting the Value of Livestock Grazing as a Means of Vegetation Control:

Tacy Currey introduced the subject on how landowners can partner with CAL FIRE to meet two objectives regarding fire protection on private rangelands. The first item is providing information on ranch infrastructure to local CAL FIRE stations and personnel regarding roads, access points, water sources, knowledge of local landscapes, sensitive areas, etc. that will assist CAL FIRE with the fire suppression effort. Secondly, CCA seeks to educate fire fighters on the consequences of excessive fence cutting, and the

value of dry forage and other ranch resources to private land owners. Tracy Schohr suggested a newsletter sent to CAL FIRE on these topics or even more preferred would be to include a training segment in Company Officer 1B that educates fire fighters on these values and their importance to the livestock industry.

Kevin Olson with the Department responded by stating that he investigated the extent to which these concepts are taught and found that they are discussed; however, there is nothing in writing in the curriculum. He further stated that the Academy is in the process right now of rewriting some of the Academy curriculum, and they will include a segment that addresses these issues. He also stated that he felt it would be of value to bring people from the ranching community into the classroom to provide first hand knowledge as to the importance of these resources.

Kevin Olson encouraged ranchers to contact their local stations at the grassroots level and begin the dialogue where needed and invite CAL FIRE out on the property. J.R. McCollister asked in which class this type of education would be most effective. Kevin Olson responded stating it would be most effective in the Company Officer Academy Course.

Tracy Schohr asked for what the next step would be. Chief Olson recommended contact with Bob Monsen (sp) at the Academy. Bob could initiate drafting up the curriculum and send it to CCA for review. Tracy Schohr volunteered writing a draft for the Academy in order to save CAL FIRE the work. Ms Schohr will consult with Farm Bureau and Wool Growers for their input. Kevin Olson will have Bob Munson get in touch with Tracy Schohr.

Chuck Pritchard recommended that some basic livestock handling would be advisable as well so that fire fighters have an opportunity to move livestock they can do it more safely and effectively.

RMAC as a committee concluded that the best course is for CCA and CAL FIRE to move forward with course development without formal review by RMAC in order to expedite the process. RMAC will issue a letter of support and appreciation to the Department.

Tracy Schohr and Mike Connor introduced the poster that promotes livestock for grazing to Kevin Olson. Tracy Currey stated that CCA is working on gaining permission from the original persons that donated the photo and the CARCD may have funding for reproduction. She put forth the idea that a similar poster could be used by CAL FIRE for distribution to the public as an educational tool. Tracy Currey asked for a source of fire facts to update the flyer every year. Kevin Olson stated that the communications section of the Department could supply the information. He further recommended that Chief Ernylee Chamlee with the Department is the appropriate person to approach with the concept.

Richard Harris stated that there is a lot of historical information developed at the Riverside Fire Lab that could be used to educate the public on the use of livestock (goats). Secondly, he noted that there is a need to assemble a list of herders that can provide these services. The herders need to make themselves known to the agencies. Mel Thompson cited a publication by the American Sheep Industry that covers all types of grazing for various purposes. It is on line. His observation is that this industry is

growing; however, there is a problem with some operations being either too small or too large for the job.

Tacy Currey noted that her experience with some groups is that the problem is not how to find a grazer; rather it is how to develop a grazing plan, finding tenants, lack of fencing, etc. She has been working with the Native Grasslands Association in Sonoma County to assist with developing this information. This has resulted in a variety of government agencies along with some of the grazers working together to select the right grazer for the job.

Chuck Pritchard called for constructing a list of goat herders along with the number of goats they have and their capabilities, and uses. RMAC as a group concurred that it is appropriate to support and work towards successful circulation of educational materials such as the poster promoted by CCA that encourages the use of livestock for vegetation control.

Leonard Hale noted that the attitudes of the US Forest Service in his area have changed. At one time the objective was to graze the fuel break intensively in order to maintain them. Recently, the attitude is to not “over graze” by US Forest Service standards, which results in more grass being available to the cattle, thus the brush species are not utilized and the fuel break is not effective.

Scott Carnegie stated the need for a compiled list of reference and research materials on targeted grazing. Tacy Currey confirmed that an extensive list of references is already on the California Rangeland Coalition website, and that it has been categorized.

Item 6, “Guide for Oak Woodland Preserves in Placer County,” Richard Harris, UC Cooperative Extension:

Richard Harris began discussion by stating that he wanted to address three items with RMAC today. He cited Appendix F of the Placer County Guidelines as the first item. He agrees with the comments submitted by RMAC and stressed that Appendix F is just a template or outline for developing a plan. He attempted to apply the template to two different areas in Placer County. In both cases the attempt was not successful due to conflicts with defensible space and the aftermath of the Angora Fire where people believed that fire damage was due to overstocked riparian zones. Therefore, the desire to reduce fuels is overshadowing attempts to manage vegetation according to appendix F. All of his efforts for a guide to manage oak woodland preserves have been put on hold until the defensible space issues are resolved by the County.

Richard Harris noted that DFG requires riparian buffers that in some cases overlap within defensible space zones. This has not been resolved. He expects his work will transfer to a County Conservation Plan that includes land swaps for developed land.

Secondly, Richard Harris relayed information on his work concerning a riparian restoration plan within Hidden Falls Placer County Park. Presently there is no money to maintain the park. The management plan priority is reducing fuels with the use of animals. He used the park to suggest several items for incorporation into the RMAC white paper on resource management:

1. Recognize that there are lands acquired for the purpose of preservation and not management.
2. When lands are acquired they are acquired as a development tradeoff and via a willing seller who could be anywhere. Willing sellers will not be selling according to a county conservation strategy. Most counties do not have a conservation strategy for land acquisition.
3. Even where a conservation strategy exists there is often no fire management strategy.
4. He urged RMAC to elevate the issue of unmanaged government acquired lands to the Board and convince them to engage FRAP in producing as a minimum overlays of these lands with fire hazard severity maps. Richard Harris related the same exercise to the GAP Analysis done several years ago that identified "hotspots" where there is a lack of biodiversity. This information would be used to determine the extent of and effectiveness of land acquisition. Mike Connor confirmed that it is RMAC's objective to elevate the white paper to the Board.

Mike Connor raised the issue of whether endowments being required for lands acquired would be a partial solution to the management problem. Tacy Currey responded stating that some counties are requiring developer fees for maintaining existing lands or used for various management purposes not necessarily tied to a specific property. Counties are using these fees to build a fund for future management of acquired land.

Mel Thompson asked for clarification from Richard Harris on what he meant by former resource management lands in his recent email correspondence. Richard Harris stated these are lands formerly managed for production by private land owners such as the Spears ranch as an example that are now under government ownership.

Richard Harris expressed continued interest with RMAC's white paper on the subject of government acquired land and expressed his desire to stay current with its development.

Item 7, Draft Board Policy Number 12: Guidance on the Certified Rangeland Manager Program and recent action taken by the CalPac Society of Range Management Certification Panel:

Mike Connor stated that the Certification panel for Certified Rangeland Managers did not meet as scheduled. Therefore, he does not have any new information regarding their deliberations on Draft Policy 12. There will be a meeting of Panel members on Friday of this week with Eric Huff, with the purpose of reconciling differences of opinions between Board staff and some members of the Panel.

Eric Huff stated that he met with Deputy Attorney Shana Bagley to discuss the issue of conditions under which a CRM is required. Mr. Huff stated that the outcome of that meeting and a subsequent letter of analysis from the AG representative are in agreement with previous memos from Board staff and the current position of the Board as expressed by Mr. Huff in previous RMAC meetings.

Eric Huff stated that there have been some misunderstandings regarding his past statements made to RMAC and proceeded to clarify his findings regarding the conditions under which a CRM is required and the reading of pertinent statute. Mr. Huff reaffirmed that his previous statements to RMAC are consistent with Chris Rowney as well as other

Board staff regarding the use of CRMs. Based on the findings of the Deputy AG and the historical Board record Mr. Huff stated that a person must be a CRM when offering advice on the management of rangelands within the context of a forested landscape. Any attempt to make the CRM apply to treeless landscapes will not happen without statutory authorization. Mike Connor noted that this information is contrary to RMAC's previous understanding; that a CRM may not be required regardless of the vegetation type. Eric Huff also clarified the definition of a "forested landscape" indicating that the concept of 10% tree canopy cover is not found in the statute. The definition states, "Those tree dominated landscapes and their associated vegetation types where there is growing a significant stand of tree species or which are naturally capable of growing a native stand of trees in perpetuity and is not otherwise devoted to non forestry commercial, urban or farming uses." Mr. Huff then referred to the draft policy statement by Bartolome and Frost for additional clarifying language. He quoted language to the effect that a license is required on hardwood rangelands and mountain meadows, but not on permanent treeless shrub lands, and native or cultivated grasslands.

Subsequent discussion dealt with use of the word "required." RMAC's understanding up to this point in time was that under no circumstances could a CRM be required. This discussion clarified that a CRM is required when practicing range management on a forested landscape as defined by the statute.

Eric Huff stated that where Board Policy 11 is lacking is language which clearly requires the use of a CRM on oak woodland/savanna landscapes. Mike Connor stated that the Draft Policy 12 does not make this point either and that perhaps RMAC should be working towards that goal. Eric Huff agreed.

Chuck Pritchard expressed frustration indicating that it can be a very "grey area" as to what constitutes a forested landscape. Mr. Huff stated that a forested landscape definitely includes oak woodlands and savannas; however, grasslands and shrub lands devoid of trees would not qualify. Mr. Pritchard cited examples in San Luis Obispo County where the gradation between forested landscapes and brush lands would make determination of the requirement for a CRM very difficult.

Mike Connor asked for clarification on where the definition for a forested landscape originated. Eric Huff responded stating it is found within the Foresters Licensing Law PRC 754. Chuck Pritchard asked where the 10% canopy came from. Eric Huff stated that it was a product of Board policy in the mid 1990s. However, it has no statutory authority and would qualify as underground regulations if enforced.

Ken Zimmerman asked if the definition of "wildlands" included what RMAC considers to be rangelands. Eric Huff stated that it would include everything from range to brush to timber. The term wildland is not used within the definition of a forested landscape. He further stated that a problem with the CRM program is that there are not enough CRMs. There is simply too much work, therefore, Policy 12 should be written to encourage more certification.

Mel Thompson noted that there has been confusion with the requirements of a RPF on forested landscapes, making this the domain of the RPF and excluding the CRM. Eric Huff stated that there has been significant overlap between the requirements for a CRM vs. a RPF, but hopefully a RPF that is not competent in rangeland management will be seeking the advice of a CRM. Mel Thompson stated that from the landowner's point of

view policy 12 should be written so that use of a CRM for rangeland management should be encouraged, and avoid the notion that a RPF is required and has jurisdiction simply because oaks are present. Eric Huff clarified that management of the oak resource is within the realm of an RPF.

Mike Connor suggested that any further action by RMAC should be deferred until after the meeting this Friday between the Certification Panel and the Deputy Attorney General.

Item 8, Request for Assistance in Addressing the Spread of Invasive Weeds by Equipment: Follow-up discussion with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.

Mike Connor noted there was not much of a response from the Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) to the RMAC letter requesting assistance on the spread of noxious weeds from equipment. He then asked Tacy Currey to report on her efforts regarding communication with the Weed Management Areas (WMAs). She indicated conversations with Terrence Lorick (CDFA) and Doug Johnson with CAL-IPC. She has been working with Mr. Johnson to develop a policy that WMAs could adopt within their local areas. Tacy Currey will provide a copy of the draft policy to RMAC prior to it being sent out. Ken Zimmerman asked if there would be value in presenting the draft policy to the Board for adoption. Tacy Currey stated that RMAC could make such a presentation, and that the policy is written so that various entities can adopt it to their respective programs.

J.R. McCollister asked if Tacy Currey had contacted Steve Schoenig on the matter. She stated that she had, however, Steve is now with DFG. She used Steve to identify key individuals that would support a policy for cleaning equipment.

Item 9, New and Unfinished Business

Ken Zimmerman asked Mike Connor if there is an outline of planned discussion for the next Rangeland Focus Group meeting. Mike Connor stated that he will revisit Draft Policy 12 as part of the next meeting.

Chuck Pritchard suggested that each member of RMAC canvas their area of the state and list any known goat grazers to form the beginning of a list of grazers in the state. Tacy Currey suggested examining CaliforniaGrazing.com for a grazers already advertizing. Mike Connor suggested expanding it beyond goats. Chuck Pritchard suggested concentration on goats since less is known about their industry. RMAC agreed to compile the list.

Chuck Pritchard suggested that RMAC construct a list of primary issues facing California grazing lands that RMAC should be addressing in future meetings. He stated that RMAC is in need of refocusing their efforts. Tacy Currey suggested that RMAC address the issues created by the law suit filed by Western Watersheds in California on grazing, timber, etc. She suggested that it would be helpful to construct a list of the types of lawsuits being filed so that groups such as CARCD can begin compiling information that will be needed to address the issues. Ken Zimmerman stated a list of this type should be circulated to the Board as well. Chuck Pritchard would like to focus (limit) RMAC on several key issues and promote those issues with the Board; be proactive and provide some leadership. Ken Zimmerman stated that RMAC will need to make sure that the groups represented by

RMAC are in agreement with the issues identified. Chuck Pritchard stated that agreement with the organizations represented by RMAC should be part of the discussion for arriving at an appropriate list of topics for concentration of effort. Scott Carnegie agreed that a list is needed and cautioned that it should be feasible and allow for taking on other tasks as they arise.

Item 10, Public Comment

None

Adjourn

New and Unfinished Business
Public Comment